MEMORY

POEMS OF WAR AND LOVE

A · NEWBERRY · CHOYCE

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A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE
Lieutenant, The Leicestershire Regiment

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BY

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE

LIEUTENANT, THE LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

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TO THE GLORIOUS LAND OF

AMERICA

In memory of those wonderful war days when I made my tour among her more wonderful people, the unworthy bearer of my Country's noble message of confidence and love,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

ENGLAND TO AMERICA

Lo! now I see
Thy dear sons play their part,
The fair expounding of a theme
Nearest thy heart.
A living dream
Of Liberty.

Lo! now I know
That God has taught thy soul
The highest ideals of His Heaven.
A starlit goal
When thou hast striven
Shall heal thy woe.

Lo! now I claim
As proudest of my joys
I helped the mingling of the blood
Which fires thy boys
To work this good
In Freedom's name.

New York, April 21, 1918
(On Landing)

FOREWORD

There is a goddess named Mnemosyne,
And she walks in a garden at twilight
Where the faded roses fall.

Lit by the smiles of remembered joy,
Watered by tears of remembered grief,
Men call it the Garden of Yesterday.

And here are scents
That bring to life dead dreams.
And here are melodies half-heard
Which steal upon the silent soul
To waken days that were.

And he who would find Hope for coming days
Shall find it most by reading earnestly
The dear remembrance of triumphant hours
Deep in the dark eyes of Mnemosyne.

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MEMORY

POEMS OF WAR AND LOVE

MEMORY

I know a lone spot on the Arras road
  Where I shall hardly bear to walk again
For fear of waking those great souls I loved
  Who struggled to a death of piteous pain.

Ah! I should hear their laughter on the way,
  And round my heart their boyish sighs would
    creep;
Till I must long to leave the rushing world
  And steal away to join them in their sleep.

For only they who tread the tortured path
  Of those torn roads where swaying poplars
    sigh,
Can dream how God could give no greater bliss
  Than this hushed peace beneath the sad French
    sky.

I know a lone spot on the Arras road
  That murmurs with the moan of Memory's
    pain.
And I should grieve my heart with stifled sobs
  If I could bear to walk that road again.

LEADERSHIP

England! who did so much for me
Hear my glad vow!
This heart all thrilled with love of thee
Goes forward now,
Striving with soldier zeal and help of Heaven
To merit this great trust which thou hast given.

England! if any crimson stain
Sets forth my share:
Or hours of patiently borne pain
Show how I care;
Conscious, I'll prize the glorious chance to prove
How all my soul is stirred by living love.

England! when victory is won,
If I should stay
With those whose every work is done
For many a day;
Somewhere I'll sleep and maybe dream again
The joy it was to die with England's men.

COUNTRY-BORN

"Tell me of home again," I said.
"Speak of the flowers that sweetly blow
With hues divine out in the fields
Which all were mine not long ago.

"Whisper the tale of how they wake
Each morning to the sun's bright call;
And then pass on and speak to me
Their heavy scents at evenfall."

He breathed it like a sacred tale,
Love on his lips for ev'ry flower.
While I—I sat with half-closed eyes
Forgetting for a little hour.

The Trenches.

CHÉRIE!

Little French Marie with big grey eyes,
  Are you still smiling each day?
Bringing the sunshine into our skies;
  Cheering the trenchward way.
Little French Marie with big grey eyes!

I hold once again your little white hand,
  Maiden of war-burdened France.
In a moment of sweet "Au revoir!" we stand
  And you give me a kind "Bonne chance!"

Little French Marie with big grey eyes,
  The wildest war night that I knew
Was more than atoned for by one of your sighs.
    I wrest this great gladness
    From war and its sadness—
  A dream of La France and you.
Little French Marie with big grey eyes!

"NO MAN'S LAND"

I crawled in a spirit-haunted place
Made wild by many a screaming shell.
And here and there a dead man's face
Lay like a livid track to Hell.

For Night had spread the jagged lands
With covering veil of sable skies;
Yet War still clenched his crimson hands
And hunted me with gleaming eyes.

I crawled in a spirit-haunted place
Made wild by souls that moan and mourn;
And Death leered by with mangled face—
Ah God! I prayed, I prayed for dawn.

Hohenzollern Redoubt.

SUNSET

Last night we stood,
Just he and I,
Silent, yet understanding, side by side;
Until the glorious flame
That spread a cloudless sky
With purple and with gold
At sunset, died.
And life seemed even sweet
As like some sign divine
There came
The hopeful evening star.

Clear shining in his eyes
One thought reflected mine,
How with such glory in the skies
High Heaven was scarcely far;
How he who would
Might almost touch the angels' feet.

So darkness stole.
The myriad stars outshone.
And all the time I never guessed
What grief would strike my hopeful breast
Ere night had gone.

Alas! before the dawn came by
I found my lonely hell.
The bitter agony,

The aching pain
Of his farewell
Who now with me
Would never stand again
And love the sky.

For, year on year that sky will spread
With purple and with gold
At quiet eventide,
But all unheeding will he sleep
Among the fallen dead
Silent, and still, and cold.

And yet I think that through the years
When twilight steals across the land,
His soul will see my bitter tears
And from the silent lands he'll creep.
So shall I find him at my side
And I shall turn and touch his hand
As in that moment when he died.
And once again we two will understand.

"ATTACK AT DAWN"

Evening sky
With gold and carmine glowing.
Roaring still
The guns that never rest.
And I—
Stifling one wild aching in my breast
For every flower that's growing
Upon a homeland hill.

And at the dawn will come
Death
To write a roll of fame
Where crimson blood is flowing;
While I look on with half-held breath
And think of Autumn fields at home
Where poppies are aflame—
And wonder will he write my name.

MYSTERY

(To a Red-Cross Boy.)

I used to think that mystery lived
On the lonely desert edge
In the eyes of the crouching sphinx;
So cold, so calm, so staring,
And so mocking.

It seemed to be suggestion of a smile
That gloats forever enigmatically
O'er tales of travellers betrayed
By shimmering mirage.
It seemed to be
Mysterious meaning of the myriad years
Set in the stone evasive eyes
That none can read.

Ah yes! I used to say
That mystery lived
On the lonely desert edge;
But that was ere I found it,
Khaki-clad,
In a crumpled, blood-stained heap
Where soldiers die in France.

He lay with wide eyes staring at the sun.
His hands more cold than stone—
His heart more still than silence of the dawn.

And as I looked on him,
My soul was swept with sudden awe;
For round his lips there seemed to creep
A small sad smile and yet not wholly sad.
Mysterious meaning of the myriad years.
And—ah!—I could not understand.

UNTIL YOU PASS

(To Jeanne.)

And when you search through wounded France
To find the cross that marks my rest,
I think the grass will hear you come
And tell it to my silent breast.

So for a moment in my sleep
A smile around my lips shall move
And bid my wand'ring soul be near
To whisper to you of my love.

To tell your heart how safe I lie
And dream my dreams all through the years.
And you will still your aching grief
For fear you hurt me with your tears.

So shall I wait in perfect rest.
My gladdest dream until you pass
To know that even Death must hear
Your loving footfall in the grass.

SACRIFICE

(*To Arthur. Fallen—July 15th, 1916.*)

Another wooden cross out on the slopes
To show another atom crushed and cast
Back from the path of War. A youthful past
Buried in crimson with a future's hopes.
One soldier less to hear reveillé call.
Thou Judge of men and War Lords—is that all?

Another boyish figure laid to sleep
Down in the soft soil where the poplars sigh.
A little moan that breathes towards the sky
And yet is stilled before the shadows creep.
Two eyes that do not see the darkness fall.
Thou Judge of men and War Lords—is that all?

Another home that knows a sudden grief;
Aching of hearts too happy yesterday,
And loving lips that trembling try to pray
When Doubt would kill the courage of Belief.
A drinking to the dregs of Sorrow's gall.
Thou Judge of men and War Lords—is that all?

Another tale of honour carried high
To be recorded in the Heavenly Plan;
Self sacrifice of man for fellow man
Born of a Christ Ideal that cannot die.

A steadfast zeal which fears could not appal.
Thou Judge of men and War Lords—is that all?

No! as the smiles fade in thy young brown eyes
A Perfect Love bathes thy soul's sanctity.
God stretches for thee His eternity.
Another star is numbered in the skies
And thou art near Him as the ages fall,
The Judge of men and War Lords—that is all.

"PER ARDUA"

Sing a little song for me,
One short refrain.
And let it be a melody
Of pain.

When you have told the tale
Of noble men,
And sung the glorious strain
That shows how great souls cannot fail,
Tune then your strings to sadness with a sigh.
Take up the theme again
But this time, brokenly,
Whisper how great hearts die—
(Sing it for me.)

And if the world should say
"Singer, where is your joy?
Why speak you now of sorrow and of death?"
Heed not the world. But play
The song I plead, and in a whispered breath
Tell me the tale of a boy.

Then sing a little song for me,
One short refrain.
And let it be a melody
Of pain.

And you shall tell of tears
That women weep.

And you shall sing of foreign soil
Where brave men sleep.
And you shall show how all eternity
Can scarcely find sufficient rest
For all their weary toil.
And say how since war's hell began
To mar the pleasant years,
His boy's heart well-nigh broke;
And happy boyhood died
With the farewell that he spoke
At a fallen comrade's side.
(Sing it for me
With heaving breast
And soul distrest.)
Tell me the tale of a man.

Sing a little song for me,
One short refrain.
And let it be a melody
Of pain.

"PRO PATRIA"

A mud-bedraggled heap
Made up of blood, and bone, and clay
Matted with khaki shred.
Fœtid and loathsome on the summer day.
Eerie and ghoulish when the shadows creep.

* * * * * * *

One of our soldier dead.

In England, papers newly from the press,
Rustling and crisp, with sickening smell.
Wild eyes that search the roll of fame;
And in one soul a swift-born hell
Of pain that none can guess.

* * * * * * *

For God has let her find his name.

YOUR BOYS

I see them in the quiet night.
I find them steadfast at their post again.
Out of the dark, their faces stern and white
Challenge my footsteps as I come.
I hear their "Post correct, sir!" and I see
In their fixed eyes the dear dead dreams of home.
But with the dawn they flee—
Your boys who were my men.

For finished is their little part.
The laughing sunlight in their eyes is gone;
And closer have they crept to God's great Heart
Taking the pity of their tale.
But in some world or worlds I'll meet again
Those soldier souls who fought and did not fail.
And I shall know each one—
Your boys who were my men.

Leicestershire.

SUNRISE

(To my sister Mary.)

Night has been long
With a thousand, thousand fears.
At times upon my lips a half-breathed song
That wakened tears.

Thinking of you
I dreamed
All through the dragging hours.
And then it seemed
I helped you gather flowers
While yet the sun
Had scarce begun
His rainbows in the dew.

And now the shadows steal—
Somewhere the dawn has stirred.
I know—I feel
Across the English sea,
Somewhere, somewhere the morning hours have heard
Your whispered prayer for me.

The Trenches.

THE BOY LEADER

There down by Arras with his thirty men
He boldly dared to play a leader's part;
And steeled himself to stifle every sign
Of smallest tremor in his boyish heart.

By glorious days of constancy displayed;
By little things that proved his soldier worth,
He caught and held the perfect trust and love
Of those who shared the grandest task on earth.

Then came a day when wild and wounded pain
Destroyed the happy triumph in his eyes,
And rushed to overwhelm him in a place
Where thirty soldiers suffered 'neath the skies.

And down by Arras there are thirty graves
Unnoticed quite in War's exacting plan.
But one boy sobs through many an English night
And pleads for courage still to play the man.

Hospital.

CONVALESCENCE

And some may say that new found happiness
Is sure inducement to forgetfulness.

The dim, half-light of dawn is here.
Alluring warmth of some soft bed
That lately lulled my every sense
And soothed me to a poppied dream
Is gone. More swift than lightning gleam
My soul is swept with sudden fear
And every tiny nerve is tense
As I am back among my dead.

My life stands still a second's space
And Memory comes with tragic spell
To bring me all the cares and joys
That I have known in other days.
I tread again War's tortured ways.
I rise and smile, and take my place
With England's men and England's boys.
I share again their glimpse of Hell.

And scarcely can God's wide eternity
Have length to bring forgetfulness to me.

Blackpool.

DISCHARGED

(With thoughts of those whom God in His Mercy needed.)

I imagine it again
Sitting by my fire.
The loneliness, the weariness, the pain,
And even its wild joys.
While all among the glowing coals
Troop by triumphant souls
Who never tire—
Fallen men and boys.

Every twilight I have tried
And yet
Cannot forget.
For though the free wind urges "Live!"
And all the flowers and birds say "Love!"
How can I smile and take
The living and the loving Fate denied
To those whose phantoms come to prove
That they could give
All for their country's sake?

And every twilight I have cried,
"They did their share. And I—"
Comes then in bitter irony
A haunting word sent out to me

From the marching souls
In the glowing coals—
"Die!"—
And I have not died.

ONE DAY

I shall come one day to the hills,
And I shall lie
In the clean strong winds that blow,
And make my "Nunc Dimittis" to the sun.
I shall seek me the woodland rills
When war's wild day is done;
And England's sky
Shall make me forget war's woe.

I shall bathe one day in the streams
That I may purge
Every foul and sickening stain
Of memories that haunt my lonely hours.
I shall live in the summer gleams
And love the drenching showers.
No winter dirge
Shall sing me a thought of pain.

I shall walk one day on the road
Where Life is free;
Where a man may wander yet
To satisfy the yearning of his soul.
I shall ease me of Sorrow's load
Of Hardship's troubled dole.
Lo! I shall see
How Peace can make me forget.

"DROWNED AT SEA"

And through the phantom-haunted night
  My tortured soul must ever go
Along the dark Atlantic bed,
  Where she is drifting to and fro.

Until I find the mesh of weed,
  And see her white form gleaming there
Among the slimy ocean threads
  That tangle all her glorious hair.

And then I touch the fingers cold,
  The lips which Love hath often pressed;
While deep-sea fish with curious eyes
  Come sweeping up against her breast.

At times from out the wreckage maze
  A scaly monster stirs and swims,
And gapes with spuming mouth to maul
  The perfect glory of her limbs.

Then must I strive with maddened strength
  To strain her body close to me
Till he forget his hungry need,
  And wallow onward through the sea.

At times I clasp my hands and yearn
  With frenzied zeal to kneel and pray

Swift Death to hush my heart which marks
  Its beating by her rhythmic sway.

God! how I hate the hellish hour
  That dragged her to this wild unrest
Where fish with glassy eyes sweep by
  On pale-black fins that flick her breast.

"Lusitania."

WAR AND LOVE

Fight!
Using thine every whit of might
To move
This faltering world towards the goal
Of firm established Right.
But ever prove
Within thy soul,
Or life or death thy fate,
The mightiest Hate
Is never strong as Love.

For Hate has birth
Upon a darkened earth,
But Love is given
In God's great Plan
Straight down to man
From Heaven.

MY FATHER

(Obiit. March 13th, 1914.)

My father was a very simple man;
I never heard him say a clever word.
But oh! his heart was warm. I think his voice
Would be the kindest sound you ever heard.

Big people scarcely saw him. I have seen
A dozen children gathered at his knee,
Where in my turn I held the chiefest place
And loved to see my playmates envy me.

If you should chance to hurt him thoughtlessly,
Then he would never blame like other men
But smile forgiveness. You would hate yourself
And on the next day hurt him once again.

The only sort of learning that he had
Was just the names of country flowers that grow
And animals, and birds. He did not seem
To miss the wisdom other people know.

And when he took you walking, hand in hand,
He'd tell you why the crows live all together,
What messages the larks take to the sun,
And where the hedgehogs sleep in wintry weather.

He'd help you gather flowers any day,
Just all the very kinds you wanted too;
So large a bunch, that coming home you'd lag
And he would have to carry them and you.

That night you'd sit beside him near the fire
And listen to the songs the kettle sings.
Or later, creeping to his bed, he'd tell
You interesting fairy-tales and things.

My father was the happiest man on earth.
He never dreamt those haunting doubts we share.
He kept a Sunday suit and went to Church—
He was so sure his God was living there.

And when he died he simply closed his eyes
To take his rest as one long Sunday given.
So children fall asleep. Ah! that I might
Have half as safe a journey to God's Heaven.

And yet he was so quiet. Men would doubt
That he had ever said a clever word.
But when he died, the sorrow in their eyes
Was more sincere than any praise you heard.

I've seen some fathers who are great and wise,
My father was as simple as could be.
I pity you—you never touched his hand
Or you would never cease to envy me.

DREAMS

When my heart sees
The hands of others hold
A joy which many a year has known
My yearning for; it seems
That I should whine my woe
To every passer-by, and say
"Ah, see how gladness ever flees
My way."

But I am wiser grown.
And when the story of my life is told,
Whatever lacks, this comfort I shall know—
I found it in my dreams.

A FAR-OFF INCARNATION

An endless age ago, and yet in dreams
I think it scarce a day.
The mighty jungle with the sweet sad scent
Of undergrowth decaying.
The languorous daytime hours—
And then the rushing night. It seems
That I am by the water's muddied brink
Where the yellow of the moon is playing
With the black shadows. And the flowers
Are crimson and purple—blurred in the grey
Of dawn, when I take one swirling drink
And furtive slink away.

My mate has fierce green in her eyes,
And her flanks are browner than burnt sand
As she crouches purring at my side,
Or snarls with me upon my way
To the tearing feasts of the jungle night.
The dripping blood upon her mouth
Stains the pale plant leaves as we go.
And, baffled at times by cunning of our prey,
We roar our passion through the star-screened
land;
But the deep-toned echo dies
Before the eastern streaks of morning light
Spread their vermilion to the south,
And gluttedly we glide
To our lairs where the wild vines grow.

An endless age ago, and yet in dreams
I am warring with the wild things of the plain
And gloating on some dying creature's screams.
Daring some swaying snake beneath a tree
Where jagged thorns are clutching at my mane.—
And life is strong, and wonderful, and free.

For as I walk in English woods—a man,
Smelling in summer-time the crushed fern fronds,
Subconsciously I sense the Mighty Plan;
Break free a moment from the human ban.
Again with glaring eyes I pierce the jungle night
And roar my fury where the moon's reflected light
Disturbs the velvet of the drinking ponds.

Charnwood Forest.

THE SEDGES

I heard the sedges rustle
As I stood beside the lake.
I watched their stalklets bending
And I feared to see them break.
But they broke not—
Only rustled by the lake.

And a song was in the sedges
And a soul was in the song.
I could hear it speaking to me
While I wandered all along.
And it ceased not—
Always singing, this soul song.

Did it tell of joys now ended?
Did it speak of years now fled?
Was it song of old romances?
Was it dirge for holy dead?
Why so strangely
Singing always years now fled?

Rather say it sang of gladness
That the future years shall bring.
And the pathos in the whisper
Of the song came from a string
Not yet tightened
For the trials years shall bring.

A FAREWELL

We smiled together, you and I,
And Life was kind
To let me learn your love.
We said "Good-bye"
And parted. Yet you stayed
Close to my heart in dreams.

I wonder did God listen while I prayed?
Then every day will prove
For you, one constant heaven sent happiness
Lit with His glad sun gleams.
And He will bless
The wildest hour of pain
For me
When that He lets me find
Your kind eyes once again
In my heart's garden of Mnemosyne.

South Pier.

MY COUNTRY LANE

If I live,
I will love again
The little flowers in a lane
Others have noticed never.
It is small—
Four yards from side to side,
And yet when I have died
While all the ages fall,
Its breathing memories will give
Balm to my soul for ever.

Days in palaces grow weary even.
Gold-fettered feet drag heavily along.
Barefooted is my lane. It leads to heaven
The wind and I have heard the angel song.

For, years ago, I caught the hidden glory
(The wind had found it earlier than I)
Of bud, and leaf, and bloom
And what they whisper through the day.
Why timorous aspens tremble at the story
And rustle it in reverence to the moon.
(The wind has set their diffidence to tune
And foxgloves mark the measure with a nod.)
I know it for the tiny daisies' theme
From early dawn repeated, till at gloom
They close each one a many-petalled eye.

For I have learned to listen. (Can *you* dream?)
"Oh, have you seen us? We are bits of God."

It is so small—
Four yards from side to side
And yet when I have died,
I think that God will let me love again
The little flowers in a lane
Others have noticed never.
And if I live
To go there for one hour of respite given
Before I hear His Call,
Then will I praise Him ever
In thankfulness that He again could give
My soul this glorious earnest of His heaven.

Hugglescote.

THE DREAMER

One day I shall waken suddenly
And find you close at hand
Waiting for me
In a wonderful garden of warm life
Where Love is.

I will leave the world
All unsuspecting
And steal to the garden gate
And enter in.
But when I reach your side
I will look into your eyes and say
The words I have been practising
Since first I had my dreams—
"Heart, I love you!"

Alas! how shall we keep
Our secret from the world?
For when I speak,
Each little flower that hears
Will lean towards its neighbour flower and say
"I love you!"
So right along the wide ways of the earth
Until the smallest bloom that grows
Along its utmost edge
Has echoed my love-tale.

One day I shall waken suddenly
And find you close at hand,
Waiting for me
In a wonderful garden of warm life
Where Love is.

. . . . . .

My soul!
If I should not wake—

THE IDEALIST

A wind stole down
And found me in my heritage
Along the glorious stretches of God's hills
Looking for her.
And I said,
"If in thy journeying,
By chance thy whispers one day speak
To her dear understanding,
Say I told thee
I am waiting—come!"
And the wind passed, whispering
"Come!"

For I have sought her
Night on night
And all a life of days;
Nor yet have found her eyes
Except in dreams.

So in my heart
A throne unoccupied;
And all my soul
Its dearest dreams to realise
If she were by.

And though I search
Throughout a waste of worlds
Till Destiny's cold hand conclude my tale;

Till God decide,
"Lo, now the time is come
For thee to leave thy dreams
And stay forever patient
In My Heaven."
What matter if I found her
At the last?

One thing I know—
That even God's own Heaven
Can never satisfy
Till I have felt her love.

Then will I even dare
To drive a bargain with the skies
And boldly say,
"If Thou wilt pledge her mine
Through endless æons—
Mine.
And where no time is, yet allow
A moment here and there
In which to love her,
Then will I come to Thee.

But otherwise,
Counting it lacking of its chiefest bliss,
No second hesitating
Thy heaven I do refuse.
Since that I am most sure
Having once dreamed of her,

God's very Heaven of Heavens
Can never satisfy
Till I have felt her love."

A wind stole down
And found me in my heritage
Along the glorious stretches of God's hills
Looking for her.
And the wind passed, whispering
"Come!"

IN LOVE

"Am I the very first?" she asked, and sighed.
(My faith, I loved her so!)
It was a moment when I might have lied;
Instead, I spoke as true men speak,
Counting it bliss to know
That love more strong than any pride
Could hold, tho' she should find me weak.

"Out in a lone lagoon through many a day,
Taking the hazard of a shark-mouthed death,
A diver labours sunny hours away
Where shadowy sea-depths clutch his stifled
breath.
His naked body in the foaming swirl
Seeking the shell that holds the perfect pearl.

See! now and then Fate suffers him to find
A tiny prize among the oyster spoil;
And for awhile a smaller pearl may blind
The vivid purport of his daring toil.
So—many times. Yet ever 'neath the swirl
There waits the shell that holds the perfect pearl.

And one wild day the lone lagoon grows sweet.
That shell of shells is lying at his feet.
What thought of any pearl on any strand
Save this that slumbers lustrous in his hand!"

I might have told her lies.
I told this tale instead
And waited for my answer in her eyes.
"Heart of all hearts!" I said,
"Pearl of all pearls on my love's ocean bed!"

We both were silent, then she took my hand
For, womanlike, Love let her understand.

LOVE CONSUMMATED

When you pray,
Tell Him I love your lips
And long for their warm pressing
Night and day.
My fierce heart is aflame
To hold your body close to me;
Kissing your finger-tips.
Pray earnestly
And linger on my name—
Tell Him I love your lips.

For He will wish to know
That I obey Him so.
Did He not make
My blood course madly for your sake,
And fire
My being with desire?
So is my love made whole.
When you pray,
Say I desire your lips—
He knows I love your soul.

Admaston.

ELOQUENCE

I sought for a word that should show
The whole wide meaning of my love
To him.
And my soul was grieved
That I could not find it.

I said,
"The flowers will know."
But I was not pure enough
To read their message
While the dawn was kissing them.
I said
"The birds can tell."
But they built their nests
And left me desolate still.

The world is so small
And my little word must be most meaningful.
I doubt if I shall find it
Under Heaven.

For it must say:
"Heart, I have waited long for thee.
Through weary ages I have lived
Just for the glorious light
That looks to me from out thine eyes.
And I have dreamed
Through life and lives

How warm thy two hands are
To hold me close."
(This must it say and more).
"Heart, is there any place for thy dear head
Than on my breast?
And is there any fervour that thy soul
Has never stirred in mine?"
(And this too must it say).
"My every prayer is prayed when thou art by,
For God has blessed me with a greater joy
Than even angels know."

Then for awhile I slept.
And by and by it seemed
That he was given to me
Before my word was found.
So could I never tell him
But must stay—
Silent,
Loving him more than life.

It was a moment only, for he guessed
And drew me with swift feeling to his breast;
And then I think he surely must have heard
My heart beat out the long-sought magic word.

Ireland, 1916.

PERSUASION

In the strange sea cities I heard men sing
How Love still rules the wand'ring world.
But I tossed my head and I smiled my smile,
And I mockingly spoke of the hateful guile
That lives in a sea of passions swirled
And binds two fools with a marriage ring.

But when the strange and gilded ships
Came speeding out of a weary night;
And I saw the eyes of the sailormen
As they yearned for their sweetheart loves again,
I envied them their glorious light
And longed myself for waiting lips.

In the strange sea cities I changed my theme,
For Love came by with smile divine
With a woman's eyes and a woman's hair.
And I only saw that she was fair
And how the years had made her mine—
Fast bound to me in a destined dream.

THE BALANCE

So,
I will laugh while you go
To the hands and eyes of another.
Love?—my love has died.
How could it live and know you
Lying at his side
With warm, red lips love-prest?
(Ah, hell of hells!—you
Lying at his side).
Every night my breast
Will burn with maddened hate
As every night I try to smother
That other fire
Of unallayed desire;
And—strive to wait.

An hour, a day, an age,
And you, and he, and I
Cold, each with worn-out heart.
An hour, a day, an age,
And you and I, and he
All dust,
An hour, a day, an age,
And he, and I, and you
Again out-thrust.
For Fate has turned another page
In life and love anew
We start.

And then
Shall come your weary turn
To learn
How Love has spun with agony
His silken mesh for men;
When that you see
Another soul gone wild for love of you,
While you
Are sick with unrequited love for me.

So,
I will laugh while you go
And when at last
This hated spell is past;
When in that other life we meet
And other eyes are gladdening it for me,
How strange, and sad, and rightful it will be
To find you yearning, pleading at my feet!

ATONEMENT

She will come again.
But I—I shall not see her
Leaning with stretched hands towards the sun.
And she will smile.
But I—I shall not know it,
Or seeing, shall not show it;
Nor evermore come near her
Who through eternity's lone while
Must pay the price for good I left undone.

Narrow her grave
And yet her heart how wide.
Choosing the souls who share Heav'n's light with
Thee
Lo, Thou must surely give
The highest place to her.
And when she whispers at Thy Side
Her dear warm love for me,
Out to the tortured space
The breathing echo of her voice shall brave
The bounds where sad souls dwell.
Shall wake in me the memory of her,
Making me glad to live
Even with this torment in my Hell—
To yearn unsatisfied for her sweet face.

THE ARTIST SOUL

(A Parable.)

There is a road
Where jagged stones are,
And I have trodden it with naked feet
Till now the flesh is tortured,
Cut, and bruised, and torn, and bleeding—
And my naked feet are red.

There are roses
Here and there
Leaning down from the steep banks
On either side the road;
Lending their glory
To the eyes of the tired traveller on his way.
But at times I have forgotten,
And I have dared to pluck and cast them
Beneath my naked feet
To ease my journeying.
So have I strewn my earth
With stolen bits of heaven.
So has it chanced
The pale blood of crushed roses
Mingles with my blood—
And my naked feet are red.

The road is far.
I have not started long.

It well may be
The white dust of the way
Will hide the blood upon my feet
Before the end.
Yet what shall hide
The pale stain of the roses
On my track?

Hist!
There is a little sound among the grasses.
It is my soul
Whispering and wondering
If the Road Maker will forget
The jagged stones He placed
Along the road where lay my journeying.

Blackpool.

REDEMPTION

The dead passed to their judgment, and I came
In my appointed place
To hear my sentence giv'n.
Nor ever dared to look upon His Face
Knowing that even Heav'n
Had no forgiveness equal to my shame—
I who had seen His good
Yet had not striv'n.

(But here and there as God gave His decree,
An angel sighed
And pitied me.)

"Thy sin so great, O man,
That I can find
No saving grace sufficient for thine aid.
This judgment then for thee—
Go forth alone
And through eternity
Live in the Hell thine own wild heart hath made.
Thine evil soul to goodness ever blind
Can never now in my Eternal Plan
Enough atone!"

Then one stole from His Side
Weeping awhile.
My heart forgot its pain
To hear her loved voice once again

And see the smile
For which on earth I would have gladly died.

"Lord, I have loved him more than life,
I who have borne his name.
His blackest sin
Drove all the gladness from my days
And burdened me with heartache to the grave.
So—let his Hell begin.
But know, I claim
To leave thy courts of praise;
And since not even Thy great Love can save,
To help him bear his shame.
Lord, I was his wife."

And God consented she should share my woe
In that wild Hell I fashioned long ago.

(But here and there, in passing, I could see
Those angels glad
Who pitied me.)

So hand in hand, unto the outer world
Where gleam of Light Divine
Hath never shone,
Our tired souls were hurled
And found the depths to which in life I fell.
Yet ever through the tortured spaces driv'n
I held her mine—

Loving and strong and true
As in those days long gone.

So æons sped.

But God grew envious when He knew
That, having her, I found a greater Heav'n
Where He had said
"Let there be Hell."

LINES TO MY MOTHER

And if God hesitates,
Doubting to give me one small spot
In His wide skies
While I, ashamed, stand pitiful;
Not any detail of my life forgot
Ah! that He then may be most merciful.
Judge as her heart dictates
And read my failings through my mother's eyes!

ENVOI

Twilight goes,
Yet still shall Memory stay
Refreshing with cool streams.
Hide then thy faded rose.
Mnemosyne
Shall guard it well for thee,
Whilst thou dost come from thy dead dreams
Back to the world's To-day.

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